(4) Ishikawa et al., *J. Gastroenterol. Hepatol.* (2001) 16:1274-1281, abstract.

AMENDMENT

In the Claims:

Please amend claim 21-23 and 25-29 as follows:

21. (Amended) A method for treating a patient infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV) comprising administering to said patient an amount of an unglycosylated, transmembrane protein having a molecular weight of about 24 kd as determined by SDS-PAGE, or a fragment thereof, wherein said protein is stable to acetone precipitation, and further wherein said protein or said fragment thereof specifically binds to the E2 protein of HCV, effective to reduce the infectivity of the virus.

E cont'd.

22. (Amended) A composition comprising an unglycosylated, transmembrane protein having a molecular weight of about 24 kd as determined by SDS-PAGE, or a fragment thereof, in combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, wherein said protein is stable to acetone precipitation, and further wherein said protein or said fragment thereof specifically binds the E2 protein of hepatitis C virus.

23. (Amended) A process for preparing a composition, said process comprising combining an unglycosylated, transmembrane protein having a molecular weight of about 24 kd as determined by SDS-PAGE, or a fragment thereof, with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, wherein said protein is stable

E1 contd.

to acetone precipitation, and further wherein said protein or said fragment thereof specifically binds to the E2 protein of hepatitis C virus.

25. (Amended) The composition of claim 22, wherein the protein lacks a functional portion of a transmembrane domain.

26. (Amended) The composition of claim 22, wherein the protein is produced by a method comprising:

(a) providing a mammalian cell that expresses said 24 kd protein;

(b) recovering and solubilizing membranes from said mammalian cell to provide a cell membrane preparation;

(c) subjecting the cell membrane preparation to ammonium sulfate precipitation at less than 33% saturation and retaining the supernatant;

E2

(d) subjecting the supernatant to ammonium sulfate precipitation at between 33% and 50% saturation and retaining the precipitate;

(e) resuspending the precipitate; and

(f) subjecting the precipitate to hydrophobic interaction chromatograpy and recovering the nonretained material.

27. (Amended) The composition of claim 26, wherein the mammalian cell that expresses said 24 kd protein hyperexpresses said 24 kd protein.

28. (Amended) The composition of claim 27, wherein the mammalian cell is a MOLT-4 cell.

29. (Amended) The composition of claim 28, wherein the cell membrane preparation is a plasma cell membrane preparation.

Please cancel claims 24 and 30-40, without prejudice and without disclaimer.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."